

Iowa Fire Service & Emergency Response Council

Meeting Minutes April 20, 2023 Fire Service Training Bureau

Council Members Present:

Justin Adams – Chairperson – *IA Fire Chiefs Association*
Pam Kenkel – *Public Member*
Scott Kovarna – *IA Professional Firefighters*
Ray Reynolds – *IA Professional Fire Chiefs*

Council Members Present Via Zoom:

Jeff Kling – Vice Chairperson – *Public Member*
Lonnie Koch – *IA Firefighters Association*
Brian Platz – *IA Association of Professional Fire Chiefs*
Megan Wichmann – *IA Professional Firefighters*
Joseph Mullen – *OSHA, Division of Labor, Ex-Officio member*

State Fire Marshal and FSTB Staff Present:

Dan Wood – *State Fire Marshal*
Jess Dunn – *FSTB Bureau Chief*

Absent (Excused):

Thomas Craighton – *IA Emergency Medical Services Association & IaSFSI*

Guests:

Kim Fensterman – *Kirkwood Community College*

Call to Order:

Chairperson, Justin Adams, called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion

Scott Kovarna made a motion to approval the April 20, 2023 agenda, seconded by Pam Kenkel. Approved.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion

Meeting minutes were previously approved by email, so no further action needed.

Council Member Term Updates (FSTB Bureau Chief Jess Dunn):

- a. Russ Perry replaces Joseph Mullen, but Russ was unable to attend today's meeting, so Joseph Mullen was in attendance in his place.
- b. IFA has submitted Bill Erb and Ellen Hagen to the Governor's office as applicants to fill that vacant position. Fire Marshal Wood has contacted the Department of Public Safety Legislative Liaison to get a status on these applications to try to get appointments made before the July meeting.
- c. Justin Adams has notified his Association and indicated he will not be applying to renew his seat on the council. Jeff Kling indicated he has put in his application to renew his seat on the council. Megan Wichmann has not had a discussion with her Association yet, but indicated she will not be applying to renew her seat on the council. She will work on finding a replacement. Fire Marshal Wood noted Thomas Craighton had indicated he planned to reapply for his seat on the council.

Community College Update (Kim Fensterman):

Kim provided the council an update on the fire science program at Kirkwood Community College. The college will be removing the fire officer training from the program plan and adding in driver operator. The college will also be pushing for students to be certified. They are also removing some hazmat courses that are redundant, since students already certify under Fire Fighter I. Students coming out of the two-year program will have professional licenses in Hazmat Awareness & Ops, Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, and Driver Operator. Students will also be able to sit for the National Registry EMT Certification. The college is also looking to changing the name to Fire Science program.

Iowa Central College in Fort Dodge also provides a fire science program, as well as Des Moines Area Community College. Hawkeye Community College does not have a fire science program.

Kim also mentioned that the college is seeing large class sizes for Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II classes recently.

Justin Adams asked Kim about frequency of meetings with her counterparts. Kim indicated there has been a lot of turnover recently at the community colleges across Iowa. She plans to work on reaching out to each of the colleges for current contacts and to provide an update to the council at the next meeting.

Kim also mentioned they are ramping up their high school and credit programs and have a dedicated faculty member who is doing onboarding.

Ray Reynolds indicated DMACC is also offering back to back classes in EMT/Advanced EMT or Advanced EMT/Paramedic so students can immediately go on for advanced certification if they choose.

Iowa Society of Fire Service Instructors Update (Thomas Craighton):

Thomas Craighton was not present to give an update.

State Fire Marshal Update (SFM Dan Wood):

Dan Wood discussed the state realignment bill has been passed and signed, so the Building Code, Fire Prevention, and Electrical Bureaus will be moving to the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL) effective July 1, 2023. Transition planning is still very early and no meetings have been held yet. The explosives bill was passed and signed, making it easier to charge persons with illegal explosives.

Dan also indicated three of the ten Arson and Explosives Bureau agents will be retiring in 2023. The average time to get an agent through bomb certification is 18 months and new staff cannot be hired until current staff are retired. The bureau is on track again to have another record year of callouts.

Justin Adams asked if there will still be a State Fire Marshal, with the realignment taking place and Dan indicated yes, and he will still be in charge of the Fire Service Training Bureau and Arson and Explosives Bureau. Another question asked was whether the fireworks grant stays or moves, and Dan indicated the fireworks grant program will move to DIAL. He will be asking whether the council will be able to still use funds from the licensing fee fund to award grants this year.

Ray Reynolds asked about whether Iowa codes would have to be changed and if any other state agencies were also being moved. Dan indicated that the bill that was passed and signed already changed the Iowa codes relevant to building code, electrical, and fire prevention to reflect the move to DIAL. He also confirmed other agencies such as plumbing, elevator, boiler, and mechanical licensing will also move to DIAL. A permanent headquarters location for DIAL has not been decided as of yet.

Jeff Kling asked about if there was a separate piece in the realignment bill regarding evaluation of the various state boards, councils, and commissions. Dan stated there is a plan for there to be a four- or five-year plan where a review will take place of every state board, council, and commission to determine if they are necessary, used, etc.

Fire Service Training Bureau Update (Bureau Chief Jess Dunn):

Jess Dunn gave a report on the fire school that recently took place. Feedback indicated the location was well received, being at Prairie Meadows Convention Center in Altoona. The cost different for FSTB was significant and also allowed to get the meeting back to in January. Jess presented to the council they would like the next fire school to be January 27-29, 2024 in Altoona again if there are no concerns from the council.

Justin Adams asked what the reason was for the January target date for training and Jess indicated for volunteer fire fighters, it is beneficial to have fire school before spring, as many are farmers, along with the various holidays that happen in the March/April timeframe. The bureau also gets busier in March/April, so January is a great slower time of the year, despite the potential for weather issues. Having fire school in January does take away the ability to do many outdoor trainings, so there may still be a skills weekend planned for the spring or summer of the year.

The bureau has an opening for a Fire Service Technician that has been reposted. Jess was able to get the minimum experience requirements reduced and hopes to have a much larger candidate pool with this reposting. The posting closes in May.

Progress continues on the training tower to be built in the northwest corner of Camp Dodge. Jess recently attended a 10% completion meeting. The Iowa Army National Guard has a full development plan for that area of the base that includes the training tower, driving facility, off-road facility, which includes ILEA, DPS, and DOT involvement. Completion is still planned for next fall for completion of the training tower.

The new fire truck funded by the AFG award two years ago is complete. It will be on display at FDIC through the end of April and then FSTB will take delivery.

Jess has been working to increase activity on the social media pages for the bureau to get more interactions and feedback on bureau activities.

The 2021 FEMA grant for the driving simulator was modified and will now include two driving simulators, which will be two one-seated driving simulators instead of one two-seated driving simulator for the same cost. Those simulators will be integrated with the pump simulators the bureau already has.

The bureau received a 2021 Fire Prevention Safety grant award for smoke detectors of \$120,000 grant, written by FSTB, but to be managed primarily by the State Fire Marshal Division in order to purchase smoke detectors.

For Field Programs, there have been 154 prop deployments for FY23 (July 1, 2022 through the end of March 2023) to fire departments around the state. They are scheduled out through the end of June 2023 and already starting scheduling for FY24. The bureau will be using all of the Volunteer Fire Fighter Training Fund. Fire Investigation School starts May 8 and May 15.

Special Programs has had 10 advanced level certification classes in 2022 and 8 advanced level certification classes to date in 2023. There are four NFA scheduled classes in FY23 and have submitted for an additional four NFA classes to be brought to Iowa.

Certifications in 2022 had 2,500 certification exams with 1,569 who passed. First quarter of 2023 has seen 932 certification exams held. Changes to the hazmat exam saw an initial increase in passing scores, but then it started dropping again. Justin mentioned they have seen more success with passing in their in-house training when hazmat is done first in the training schedule. Jess will push out that suggestion to the field. The written and practical examinations have been combined since the first of the year to the same testing date and is getting very positive feedback on that.

Jess still wants the council to go to all electronic testing for the bureau for numerous reasons (past issues and instant test results), but also realizes there may be obstacles to overcome in smaller, rural areas of the state, because of equipment access issues. At this time, this is more of a mention for the council to start thinking about, but no target date in mind at this time. Ray Reynolds suggested at some point that if someone wanted to still do a written test, they would be required to travel to the bureau for that test so FSTB staff would proctor the exam.

FSTB will be changing certification patches to include the updated logo and a plan will be needed for how to distribute those new patches.

Old Business:

Senate File 333 (Iowa Code 321-451) Training for Drivers is still ongoing. Ray Reynolds drafted a letter to be sent to Legislative Services and sent that to council members to approve in November 2022, but no further action has been taken and the letter hasn't been sent. Justin read the letter at today's meeting for council members to provide feedback. A few adjustments need to be made and Justin will take care of those and then send it to the Governor on behalf of the council.

New Business:

Ray Reynolds put forth Brian Platz as nomination for Council Chair; however, Brian declined due to staffing shortages in his department.

Jess Dunn put forth Jeff Kling as nomination for Council Chair; however, Jeff's council seat is up for reappointment in July so he suggested another member might be a better choice for nomination, should he not be reappointed.

Justin suggested election of a new Council Chair, and possibly Vice Chair, should be tabled to the next council meeting once new appointments/reappointments have been made.

Scott Kovarna indicated he would be willing to step into the Council Chair seat and recommended Ray Reynolds as Vice Chair.

Motion

Jeff Kling called for a motion to elect Scott Kovarna as Council Chair and Ray Reynolds as Vice Chair. Ray Reynolds seconded the motion for Scott as Council Chair and Megan Wichmann seconded the motion for Ray Reynolds as Vice Chair. Both motions were approved.

Other Business:

Revolving loan applications were sent out to the members for review. A subcommittee was put together at the November 2021 meeting of Ray Reynolds, Pam Kenkel, Lonnie Koch, and Brian Platz. There is over \$700,000 in the revolving loan fund and nothing is approved over \$150,000 per application. Jess Dunn did confirm that all three applicant departments are actively reporting incidents. Ray Reynolds indicated in past, applicants

typically had a vehicle in mind for purchase first rather than requesting the loan and then going in search of a vehicle; however, due to a currently volatile market, it may be necessary to approve the loan first. None of the applicants had vehicle specifications on the applications because of this, which is typically required for application. Concerns were also raised about the age of potential vehicles to be purchased with the loan. There was agreement that while 20 years or older is probably too old, the scarcity of available vehicles at this time may necessitate the purchase of an older than desired vehicle and there needs to be a certain amount of flexibility with approval of a purchase. Dan Wood also suggested perhaps a full DOT inspection be required to confirm the vehicle is road worthy and meets the NFPA requirements at the time the vehicle was manufactured; not retrofit a vehicle originally manufactured for a different purpose. Jess will resend the loan applications to the subcommittee members, along with the review sheets, as there was more information provided after the applications were originally emailed out. Subcommittee members will complete evaluation worksheets on the applications and return them within two weeks of this meeting to Jess Dunn.

Joe Mullen provided an update on an OSHA investigation. On November 30, 2022, an inspection was initiated at Norway Fire Department and it recently closed April 4, 2023. There was an injury and citations were issued. An individual fell and required hospitalization. The department was cited for using the wrong ladder/improper use of a ladder and for not reporting the hospitalization/loss of an eye/amputation within 24 hours. Joe clarified that OSHA needs to be contacted for any in-patient hospitalization, loss of any eye, or amputation within 24 hours.

Dan Wood thanked Justin Adams for all his work for and dedication to the Iowa Fire Service & Emergency Response Council. Justin has been a member since the initiation of the council, originally as the Iowa Professional Fire Fighter member and representative.

Public Comments:

None.

Action Items:

- Kim will plan to have an update for the council at the next meeting on meetings with her counterparts at other Iowa community colleges.
- A plan needs to be created for distribution of the new FSTB certification patches. The council needs to start thinking about moving to electronic examinations, with any written examinations proctored at FSTB only.
- Jess will resend the revolving loan applications to the subcommittee members, along with the review sheets, as there was more information provided after the applications were originally emailed. Subcommittee members will review applications and return review sheets within the next two weeks.

- Going forward, when subcommittees are formed, make sure the council is utilizing them. Dan Wood recommended adding them to the agenda for each meeting to report updates.
 - The subcommittee for the training tower (Scott Kovarna and Ray Reynolds) should start thinking about what the requirements should be for the design of the tower.
 - The budget subcommittee (Brian Platz, Megan Wichmann, and Justin Adams) was to meet with the new FSTB chief once hired to develop an operating budget. Megan and Justin are not applying for reappointment to the council, so a new budget subcommittee may need to be formed. FY24 budget has already been completed and a budget may not be requested for FY25 due to the state-wide realignment and changes in the State Fire Marshal Division's overall budget.

Adjournment:

Motion

Scott Kovarna called for a motion to adjourn. Second and passed.